PROBLEM

The Emerald Ash Borer Beetle (EAB) is close to Nebraska and moving across the United States. Currently the EAB is already in Iowa, Kansas and Colorado. Experts project EAB will be in Norfolk in one to five years. This beetle's larvae will kill all the ash trees within 15 years of its arrival. Half the ash trees will die between nine and 12 years after its arrival. The City of Norfolk Park Division and the City of Norfolk Tree Advisory Board are preparing the following plan to deal with the issue of dead ash trees throughout the City.

Approximately 19% of the park and terrace trees in Norfolk are ash trees of varying species. There are many more ash trees on private land. The City is responsible for care and removal of affected ash trees on City owned land such as City parks and around City owned buildings. The homeowner is responsible for the ash trees on their land and on the street terraces adjacent to their land. Ash trees on land owned by schools, county, state or federal governments are the responsibility of those agencies. Those agencies are also responsible for ash trees on street terraces adjacent to their land.

The EAB presents a significant threat to safety in that ash trees are invaded by a fungus when they die. This fungus makes the ash wood become brittle. The ash trees then will drop limbs and fall over. Cars, homes, garages and other buildings and people are at risk of damage or destruction or injuries. The EAB presents a significant challenge to the City and others that will be affected. The City is publishing information for homeowners as to their risk and future financial challenges.

RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM FOR THE CITY OF NORFOLK

1. Stop planting ash trees. Already it is nearly impossible to purchase an ash tree. It has been several years since the City planted any ash trees.

2. Inventory the location, number and condition of all ash trees on City owned land. There are City personnel with the knowledge and skill to identify ash trees and their condition. Also identify any ash trees that due to location or size may require a professional to remove. Prepare a map or Google image of each park and City building with the ash trees marked then the ash trees can be over-marked as they are removed. An initial inventory was done in June, 2015. The City ash tree inventory and mapping will need to be maintained, updated and reviewed annually.

3. Determine if any City owned, large, healthy ash trees are worth the time and money to attempt to treat them. Treatments are available but are expensive and environmentally challenging. Also the treatments currently under consideration must be applied annually for the life of the tree.

4. Once the ash tree Inventory is done, then preplanning and prioritization for removal and replacement can begin. The goal is to plant two trees on City owned land for each ash tree removed from City owned land. The choice of tree species will be dependent on location, purpose, availability and size of available trees and will be an ongoing joint program of the City Park Department and the City Tree Advisory Board. Ideally the City of Norfolk Urban Forest would be no more than 5% any one specie, 10% any one genus, and 15% any one family. Some preplanning and some concurrent planning will both be necessary to achieve the ideal diversity of tree species. Refer to the Inventory of Terrace and Park trees in Norfolk done in 2010.

5. Be proactive and spread the cost of ash tree removal over many years to lessen the impact of having to deal with it all within a relatively short period of time. As budget and personnel time allow, remove a reasonable amount of ash trees each year. Prioritize by health and aesthetics, removing first the ash trees showing signs of die-back, disease and of poor form. It may be 10 to 15 years before the brunt of ash tree

death occurs and attempts should be made to have most of the ash trees removed before that time frame. If weedy growth of ash saplings is found, they should be removed early. Any ash trees that threaten buildings or parking areas should be removed early. All ash tree stumps of any and all sizes must be treated with bush killers to prevent them from re-growing. City staff are trained and qualified to handle the removal of most of the ash trees. Scheduling the removal of those ash trees that require a professional with larger equipment will need to be fit into the budget.

6. Once the EAB is known to be in Norfolk, keep watch on any remaining City owned ash trees for signs of dying, dangerous and threatening tree conditions, so as to facilitate their removal.

HOME OWNERS SUGGESTED PLAN

1. Stop planting ash trees.

2. Identify any ash trees on your property and terrace. If more than a few, mark them on a Google map image of your land so you can over mark them when removed.

3. Determine if you own any large, healthy, ash trees that are major parts of your landscape you might want to attempt to save. Investigate the costs and issues with treatments. DO NOT BEGIN TREATMENTS UNTIL THE EAB IS WITHIN 15 MILES OF YOUR PROPERTY.

4. Lay out a plan for the removal and possible replacement of any ash trees on your land or terrace. In your plan consider:

a) Size, location and difficulty of removal.

b) The fact that odds say a majority of your ash trees will die in a three year span, although their death could be spread over 15 years.

c) Your personal skills and expertise in tree removal. Is this something you can do or do you need the help of a professional tree care service?

d) Your landscape and how you want it to look and function for you (canopy, shade areas, sunny areas, attractiveness, variety of trees) on your land and in your neighborhood.

e) Plan for replacement trees, bearing in mind maintaining diversity of species, genus and family on your land and in your neighborhood.

f) Your budget.

5. Once the EAB has arrived, keep an eye on any remaining ash trees for signs of dying and dangerous, threatening tree conditions so as to be ready to remove them appropriately.